

Short Instructions for the SICK:

Especially who by Contagion, or otherwise, are deprived of the
Presence of a Faithfull PASTOR.

By RICHARD BAXTER.



Howe happy persons who have made it the chief care and business of their lives, to be alwayes ready for a dying hour, have least need of my present counsel: It is therefore those unhappy souls, who are yet unprepared, whom I shall now instruct. And, O that the Lord would blese these words; and persuade them yet, ere Time be gone!

If sin had not bewitched men, and made them Monsters of senselesnes and unbelief, it could not be, that an *Endless Life*, so sure, so neer, could be so fortitously made light of, all their lives, as it is by most, till they perceive that Death is ready to surprize them. But, poor sinner, if this have been thy case, supposing yet that thou art unwilling to be damned, I earnestly intreat thee in the Name of Christ, for the sake of thy immortal soul, that thou wilt presently lay to heart these short Instructions, before Time and Hope are gone for ever.

I. At last bethink thee *what thou art*? and for *what End and Work* thou camest into the world? Thou art a Man of Reason, and not a Brute, and hast a Soul which was made to *Know*, and *Love*, and *Serve* thy Maker, and that not in the second place, with the leavings of the flesh; but in the first place, and with all thy Heart and Might. If this had been indeed thy life, God would have been thy Portion, thy Father, and thy Defence, and thou mightst have liv'd and dy'd in peace and comfort, and then have liv'd with God for ever. And should not a Creature live to the Ends and Uses which it was made for? Must God give thee all thy powers for Himself, and wilt thou turn them from him, to the service of the flesh, and that when thou hadst vowed the contrary in thy Baptism? How wilt thou answer for such treacherous ungodliness?

II. It is time for thee now to have *serious thoughts of the Life which thou art going to*: If thou couldst sleepily forget it all the way, it is time to awake when thou art almost there. When thy friends are burying that flesh in the earth, which thou didst more regard than God and thy Salvation, thy Soul must appear in an endless world; and see those things which God foretold thee of, and thou wouldst not believe, or set thy heart upon: As soon as Death hath opened the curtains, O what a sight must thou presently behold! A world of Angels and of holy Souls adoring, and praising, and admiring that God, whom thou didst refuse to *mind*, and *love*, and *serve*: A world of Devils and damned souls, in torment and despair, bewailing their contempt of Christ and Grace, their neglect of God, and their Salvation, their serving the flesh, and loving the world, and wilfully losing the time of mercy, and all the means which God vouchsafed them. Believe it, *sinner*, there is an Endless Joy and Glory for the Saints, and an Endless Misery for all the ungodly; and one of these must quickly be thy case. Thy state is changeable while thou art in the flesh: If thy Soul be miserable, there is yet a Remedy: Its possible Christ may renew and pardon it: But as soon as thou goest hence, thou enterest into a State of Joy or Torment, which must never change: No not when millions of years are past. And dost thou not think now in thy conscience, that such an Endless Misery should have been prevented with greater care and diligence, than all the sufferings of this life? And that the attaining of such an Endless Glory, had been worth thy greatest care and labour? And that it is far better to see the Glory of God, and be filled with his Love, and joyfully praise him with his Saints and Angels, for evermore, and by a Holy life to have prepared for this; than to please the flesh, and follow the world a little while, and be undone for ever! Hast thou got more by the world and sin, than Heaven is worth? Thou art almost at the end of worldly pleasures, and hast all that ever they will do for thee? But if God had had thy heart and service, he would not thus have cast thee off; and his Rewards and Joyes would have had no end. O how much happier are the blessed Souls in Heaven, than we?

III. And seeing you are so neer to the Judgment of God, where your Soul must receive its final sentence, it is high time now to *judge your self*, and know *what state your Soul is in*? whether in a state of *Justification*, or of *Damnation*. For this may be certainly known if you are willing. And first you must know *who they be* whom Christ will *justify*, and whom he will *condemn*: And this the *Word of God* will tell you: For he will judge them by *that Word*. In a word [*"All those whom Christ will justify and save, are made new creatures by the renewing work of the Holy Ghost: Their eyes are opened to see the vanity of this world, and the certainty and excellency of the Glory of Heaven; and to see the odiousness of sin, and the goodness of a holy life, and to believe that Christ is the only Saviour, to cleanse them from their sins, and bring them to that Glory. And therefore they forsake the sinful pleasures of the flesh, and set their hearts on the everlasting blessedness, and seek it before all things, and lamenting and hating their former sins, they give up themselves sincerely, to their God and Father, their Saviour, and their Sanctifier, to be taught*

"and ruled, justified, sanctified, and saved by him; resolving whatever it cost the flesh, to stand to this choice and Covenant to the death." This is the case of all that Christ will justify and save: The rest who never were thus renewed and sanctified, will be condemned, as sure as the Gospel is true. Therefore let it be speedily your work, to try whether this be your case or not? Have you been thus enlightened, convinced, and renewed, to believe in Christ, and the life to come, and to give up your self in a faithful Covenant to God your Father, your Saviour, and your Sanctifier? to hate your sin, and to live and love a holy life, in mortifying the flesh, and seeking Heaven before the world? If this be not your case, I should but flatter and deceive you to tell you of any hope of being saved, till you are thus renewed and justified. Never imagine a lye to quiet you, till help is past. No one that is unregenerate or unholy, shall ever dwell with God. Yet you may be saved, if yet you will be truly converted and sanctified: But without this, assuredly there is no hope.

IV. Therefore I counsel you in the name of Christ, to *look back upon your sinful life with sorrow*; not only because of the danger to your self, but also because you have *offended God*! What think you now of a *sinful* and of a *holy life*? Had it not been better that you had valued Christ and Grace, and lived in the love of God, and in the joyful hopes of the life to come, and denied the sinful desires of the flesh, and been ruled by the Law of God, and spent your time in preparing for eternity? Do you not heartily wish that this had been your course? Would you take this course if it were to do again? and God recover you? Repent, repent from the bottom of your heart, of the time you have lost, the mercy you have abused, the grace you have resisted, of all your *fleshy, worldly* desires, words and deeds, and that you gave not up your soul and life to the Love of God and life eternal.

V. And now resolvedly give up your self in a hearty Covenant to God! Though it be late, he will yet accept and pardon you, if you do it in sincerity. Take God for your God, your portion and felicity, to live in his Love and praise for ever; Take Christ for your Saviour, to teach, and rule, and justify you, and bring you unto God; and the holy Spirit for your Sanctifier, and certainly God will take you for his Child. But see that you be truly willing of his Grace, and resolved never to forsake him more. O happy Soul, if yet at last, the Lord will make this change upon thee! And I'll tell you certainly how to know, whether this late Repentance will serve for your Salvation, or not. If it be but *Fear* only which causeth your Repentance, and the *Heart* and *Will* be not renewed, but you would turn again to a *fleshy, worldly* and ungodly life, if you be recovered, then it will never save your soul. But if your *Heart*, your *Will*, your *Love* be changed, and this change would hold if God recovered you to health again, then doubt not of pardon and Salvation.

VI. And if God have thus changed your heart, and drawn it to Himself, be thankful for so great a mercy! O blese him for giving you a Redeemer and a Sanctifier, and the pardoning Covenant of Grace. And now be not afraid or loath to leave a *sinful* world, and come to God! Pray harder for grace and pardon, than for life. Commit and trust your souls to Christ! He had never done so much for souls, if he had not loved them, and been willing to receive them! How wonderfully came he down to man, to bring up man to the sight of God! He is gone before to prepare us a Mansion in the City of God, and hath promised to take us to himself, that we may dwell with him, and see his Glory! The world which you are going to, is unlike to this! There is no pride, or lust, or cruelty, oppression, deceit, or any sin! No wicked men to scorn or persecute us! No vanity to allure us! No Devil to tempt us! No corruption of our own to burden or endanger us! No fears, or cares, or griefs, or discontents! No poverty, sickness, pain, or death! No doubtings of the Love of God or our Salvation! But the sight of God, and the feelings of his Love, and the fervent flames of our Love to him, will be the everlasting pleasure of the Saints! These will break forth in triumphant and harmonious thanks and praise in the presence of our glorified Redeemer, and in concord with all the heavenly Hosts, the blessed Angels, and the Spirits of the Just! This is the end of faith and holiness, patience and perseverance: When Hell is the end of unbelief, ungodliness, sensuality, and hypocrisy. How justly are they condemned, who sell their part of endless Joyes, for a shadow and dream of transitory pleasures? and can delight more in the filth of sin, and in a fading vanity, than in the Love of God, and the fore-thoughts of Glory! What Love can be too great, what Desires too fervent, what prayer and labour can be too much! what suffering too dear for such a Blessedness?

VII. Lastly, Because there are many cases of the sick, which require the presence of a *judicious Divine*, if it be possible get the help of such; if not, remember that God is just, in denying men that mercy in their distresses, which in the time of their health and prosperity they rejected with scorn & contempt, and cleave to him whom you may enjoy for ever.

Rev. 2. 7, 10.
Prov. 11. 7.
Job 8. 13, 14.

Luk. 13. 35.
Luk. 15.
Matth. 18. 3.

Matth. 11. 28.
2 Cor. 8. 5.
Act. 11. 23.

Psal. 78. 34.
35, 36, 37.
Hebr. 8. 10.
& 10. 16.
Jer. 32. 40.

Phil. 1. 21, 23.
2 Cor. 5. 18.
Rev. 14. 13.
Act. 7. 59.
John 17. 24.
& 12. 16.
Rev. 21. & 22.

Mal. 2. 7.
James 5. 14.
Psal. 73. 26.